

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 177957

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 19005 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO TANANARIVE
DTD 22 JUL 75
QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 19005

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CN, FR
SUBJECT: COMORIAN INDEPENDENCE

REF: STATE 170711

1. OFFICIAL FRENCH POSITION ON COMOROS INDEPENDENCE
REMAINS VAGUE. THE COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING THE JULY 9
MEETING OF THE FRENCH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS "TOOK NOTE"
OF THE INDEPENDENCE DECISION, BUT ACCORDING TO QUAI
DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA COMBAL, THIS DID NOT IMPLY
RECOGNITION. THE FRENCH ALSO ANNOUNCED AT THAT TIME
THAT THEY WERE PREPARED TO MOVE TOWARD A TRANSFER OF
AUTHORITY IN THE THREE ISLANDS (NOT MAYOTTE) BUT COMBAL
TOLD US JULY 22 THAT NO MOVEMENT HAS BEEN MADE TOWARD
CONVERSATIONS ABOUT TRANSFER SINCE PRESIDENT ABDALLAH
INSISTS ON DISCUSSIONS BASED ON GLOBAL INDEPENDENCE.
IN ALL FOUR ISLANDS LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS CONTINUING UNDER
THE SAME OFFICIALS WHO STILL RECEIVE CHECKS FROM THE
FRENCH GOVERNMENT. ON MAYOTTE, AUTHORITIES FROM MORONI
CONFIDENTIAL

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ARE STAYING ON THEIR JOBS AS THAT ISLAND DOES NOT HAVE
PERSONNEL AVAILABLE TO REPLACE THEM. COMBAL ADDED THAT
HE DID NOT KNOW WHEN A TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY MIGHT TAKE
PLACE AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT BECAUSE OF LOCAL

POLITICAL RIVALRIES, ABDALLAH WILL FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO UNDERTAKE CONVERSATIONS WHICH, HOPEFULLY, STILL MIGHT LEAD TO A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT INVOLVING A FEDERATED STATE.

2. EXPANDING ON THE LEGAL DIFFICULTIES THE FRENCH FACE, COMBAL SAID THAT THE EXECUTIVE CANNOT MAKE A FORMAL GESTURE OF RECOGNITION BEFORE THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES DESCRIBED IN THE JUNE 30 INDEPENDENCE LAW HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. IN OTHER WORDS, HE SAID "WE CORNERED OURSELVES". HE HINTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE QUAI HOPES A JURIDICAL STUDY ORDERED BY THE ELYSEE WILL SOMEHOW RESOLVE THE DILEMMA.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE EARLY RECOGNITION BY A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL AFRICAN STATES, COMBAL THOUGHT THAT THE ENTIRE CONTINENT COULD NOW BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE RECOGNIZED COMOROS BY ELECTING IT TO OAU MEMBERSHIP. OUTSIDE AFRICA, COMBAL SAID HE WAS CERTAIN ONLY OF RECOGNITION BY IRAQ AND SYRIA BUT THOUGHT THAT OTHER ARAB STATES MIGHT HAVE DONE SO TOO.

4. COMBAL DENIED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN TROUBLES IN ANY OF THE FOUR ISLANDS AND CALLED ABDALLAH'S CHARGE THAT THE FRENCH ARE BLOCKADING AND EMBARKING TROOPS ON COMOROS "RIDICULOUS". HE SAID THAT ON JUNE 15 THERE WERE SOME 200 GENDARMES AND FOREIGN LEGIONNAIRES IN THE COMOROS, TWO-THIRDS ON MAYOTTE, ONE-THIRD IN MORONI. THE FRENCH SENT 200 ADDITIONAL GENDARMES TO MORONI AT THE TIME OF ABDALLAH'S UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. TODAY THERE ARE 200 GENDARMES AT MORONI, THE FRENCH HAVING RECALLED ALL THE LEGIONNAIRES (60) THAT WERE STATIONED THERE. 120 LEGIONNAIRES REMAIN IN MAYOTTE.

5. AS FOR THE ALLEGED BLOCKADE, COMBAL SAID (WITH THE REQUEST THAT THE INFORMATION BE CLOSELY HELD) THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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THREE SMALL VESSELS OF THE FRENCH INDIAN OCEAN FLEET ARE IN FACT CIRCLING ABOUT 4 HOURS SAILING TIME AWAY FROM MORONI. THEY ARE THERE PURELY AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE AND HAVE NO INTENTION TO BLOCKADE ANYTHING, WERE THEY ABLE TO DO SO, HE INSISTED.

6. AS FOR FRANCE'S FRIENDS, COMBAL CONTINUED, THE QUAI HOPES THEY WON'T MAKE A SUDDEN GESTURE TOWARD RECOGNITION WHICH WOULD TEND TO COMPLICATE THE GOF'S RELATIONS WITH ABDALLAH. IF FRANCE'S FRIENDS FIND IT NECESSARY TO MAKE A MOVE, THE QUAI HOPES THEY WILL SIMPLY RECOGNIZE "THE COMOROS" WITHOUT BEING MORE SPECIFIC, SUCH AS BY MENTIONING UNITY. HE SAID THE

FRENCH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS INSTRUCTIONS TO GIVE
THIS REPLY TO A QUERY FROM ASST. SEC. DAVIS.
GAMMON UNQUOTE
INGERSOLL

CONFIDENTIAL

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